

# Trump talks drug, campaigns against Massie

**CINCINNATI** (AP) President Donald Trump toured an Ohio pharmaceutical company on Wednesday and planned to campaign in the nearby Kentucky district of a Republican in Congress he'd like to see defeated — attempting to project political and economic strength as war in Iran has scrambled financial markets and hurt his poll numbers.

Trump toured Thermo Fisher Scientific in suburban Cincinnati, talking up his administration's efforts to persuade major manufacturers to lower prescription medication prices so that they are closer to what is charged abroad.

"I used some very strong negotiating talent to get every single country to almost immediately approve. I threatened them with tariffs," he told reporters.

The Supreme Court recently struck down sweeping tariffs that Trump's administration had imposed around the world to boost his economic policies. But the president used an executive order to restore some levies, and says his push to lower drug costs can help Republicans ahead of November's midterms.

His trip, however, was overshadowed by the military action in Iran, which Trump said was "an excursion that will keep us out of a war." He added of Tehran, "for them, it's a war. For us, it's turned out to be easier than we thought."

The president also acknowledged stock markets that have been volatile as gas prices have risen, saying, "I figured we'd be hit a little bit. But, we were hit probably less than I thought."

"We'll be back on track in a pretty short while," Trump continued. "Prices are coming down very substantially. Oil will be coming down."



AP PHOTO  
**President Donald Trump poses for a photo during a visit to Thermo Fisher Scientific, Wednesday, in Cincinnati.**

He called the turmoil "just a matter of war," saying "that happens," while adding, "I would say it went up a little bit less than we thought."

### Trump seeks to defeat a Republican antagonist

Trump was next heading to the district of Rep. Thomas Massie, one of the few congressional Republicans who has dared defy Trump on Iran and other major issues. Trump has endorsed a GOP primary challenger to Massie, Ed Gallrein.

The trip is an early test of Trump's ability to cleanse his party of those who oppose him, but also to try to stay on an economic message increasingly strained by the military action launched by the U.S. and Israel against Iran.

"We have hit them harder than virtually any country in history has been hit," Trump said as he left the White House on Wednesday, "and we're not

finished yet."

Polls showed that Americans were increasingly wary of Trump's handling of the economy even before the conflict with Iran began, and fighting there has derailed Trump's messaging, as the low gas prices he once bragged about are now surging and stocks that had set record highs have slipped.

Employers also cut an unexpectedly high 92,000 jobs in February, and revisions trimmed another 69,000 jobs from December and January payrolls — which the White House had previously hailed as "blockbuster."

### Affordability tour continues

After Democrats pushing the message that the everyday cost of living remained too high won the Virginia and New Jersey governors' races in November, the White House announced that Trump would travel the country more frequently. It was an attempt to show that he's taking kitchen table issues

seriously and reassure voters nervous about still-rising prices and economic growth.

Since then, the president has made stops in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina and Texas — though his speeches have sometimes been more focused on his own political grievances than on his plans to help lower everyday costs across the country.

This trip, however, marks the first time in this primary cycle that Trump has sought to keep promises to punish members of his own party who oppose him on key issues.

The president has endorsed Gallerin, a farmer, businessman and retired Navy SEAL, who is running against Massie in Kentucky's Republican primary on May 19.

Massie is an outspoken Trump critic who opposed the White House-backed tax and spending measure and bucked Trump by pushing to have files related to the sex trafficking investigations into Jeffrey Epstein released.

He's also criticized the U.S. strike on Venezuela that toppled then-President Nicolás Maduro and, most recently, the war in Iran.

Trump posted on his social media site during his Wednesday trip, "The Republican Party's Worst 'Congressman,' EVER, Thomas Massie."

Massie has not been overly critical of Trump's visit, suggesting that he hoped the president would be working for the district. But he told the Cincinnati Inquirer that Trump's endorsement is "all my opponent has going for him," adding that Gallerin "has promised to be a rubber stamp when he gets to Washington D.C. and I don't think people here want a rubber stamp."

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